

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1221

INFO AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L PORT MORESBY 0141

CINCPAC FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, PP

SUBJ: AUSTRALIAN MILATT VIEWS ON IRIAN JAYA/PNG BORDER SITUATION

REF: (A) PORT MORESBY 0140 (B) PORT MORESBY 0128

1. AUSTRALIAN MILATT IN CONVERSATION WITH POLOFF INDICATED AUSTRALIAN SOURCES OF INFO RE BORDER QUITE LIMITED. MOST COMES FROM AUS CIT PETER GOALL WHO IS DEPUTY PROVINCIAL COMMISSIONER AT VANIMO WEST SEPIK DISTRICT. GOALL GAVE BRIEFING TO COMMANDER PNGDF DIRO AND FIFTY OFFICERS ON FEBRUARY 12 RE BORDER SITUATION WHICH AUSTOFF BELIEVES MAY BE DIRO'S MAIN SOURCE OF INFO.

2. MILATT BELIEVES GOALL WAS TO EMOTIVE IN HIS BRIEFING AND THAT HE MAY HAVE FAILED TO DRAW CLEAR LINE BETWEEN SPECULATION AND PROVEN FACT RE NUMBERS OF DISSIDENTS, SOURCES OF SUPPLY FOR WEAPONS AND FINANCING. MILATT SAID ONLY PHOTOS THEY HAVE OF REBELS WEAPONS SHOW STEN GUNS, MAUSERS, LUGERS AND SHOTGUNS. THERE IS NO PROOF OF U.S., SOVIET OR NORTH VIETNAM WEAPONS NOR THAT OF ANY OTHER MAJOR SUPPLIER. THIS DOES NOT MEAN THAT REBELS DO NOT HAVE THEM, IT ONLY MEANS AUSTRALIANS HAVE NO PROOF THAT THEY DO. THE AUSTRALIANS HAVE NO PROOF THAT THE

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REBELS ARE LINKED TO THE PKI.

3. IN REGARD TO FINANCING, THEY BELIEVE SOME IS COMING FROM IRIANESE IN HOLLAND AND A TRICKLE FROM IRIANESE IN PNG, BUT HAVE NO PROOF OF A MAJOR FINANCIAL SUPPLIER. RE NUMBER OF REBELS THEY HAVE LITTLE INFO. THEY BELIEVE GOALL USED FIGURE OF 600, BUT THINK IT WAS DERIVED FROM COMPROMISE BETWEEN ESTIMATES OF 100 TO 1000 REBELS. MILATT POINTED OUT THAT GOALL MAY BE CORRECT IN HIS FIGURES, BUT AUSTRALIAN INTELLIGENCE PERSONNEL ARE UNABLE TO SUBSTANTIATE HIS VIEWS.

4. THEY ARGUE THAT THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT A MAJOR CONFLICT HAS OCCURRED IN WEST IRIAN, AND CONFIRM THAT ONLY ONE WEST IRIANESE WOUNDED HAS BEEN SENT BACK ACROSS THE BORDER (NOT TO INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES). THEY ACCEPT THE THESIS THAT INDONESIA HAS NOT BEEN EFFECTIVE AGAINST THE DISSIDENTS.

5. IN REFERENCE TO THE PRESS RELEASE OF FEB. 17, 1976 ISSUED IN SYDNEY BY THE REVOLUTIONARY PAPUA GOVT. INFORMATION OFFICER, THEY BELIEVE THE ONLY CORRECT STATEMENT IN IT IS SUMMARY OF LETTER SENT BY SIR MAORI KIKI TO THE WPNG PRESIDENT KUMKOREM ON DECEMBER 23, 1975 STATING THAT THE GPNG WOULD COOPERATE WITH INDONESIA AND REFUSE SANCTUARY TO THE REBELS. LETTER ALSO URGED THE REBELS TO DISBAND AND INDICATED THAT REBELS CAPTURED IN PNG WOULD BE HANDED OVER TO INDONESIAN AUTHORITIES. MILATT BELIEVES REPORTS OF BATTLES IN WEST IRIAN FROM JANUARY 3 TO FEBRUARY 10 ARE FABRICATIONS, BUT EVEN IF ROUTINE PATROLLING RESULTED IN SMALL CLASHES IS CERTAIN THAT THE PNGDF DID NOT ASSIST INDONESIANS OR BECOME INVOLVED IN ACTION AGAINST THE REBELS.

COMMENT: AUST MILATT IS OBVIOUSLY TRYING TO DEFLATE RUMOR MILL, WHICH IS NORMALLY HYPERACTIVE IN PORT MORESBY. WE HAVE NOTED OTHER OCCASIONS WHEN AUST HICOM OFFICERS HAVE PLAYED DOWN ANY SUGGESTIONS OF PROBLEMS WITH INDONESIA.

SEEMS LIKELY THAT ROUTINE (AND INEFFECTUAL) PATROLLING BY INDONESIANS CONTINUES, AND GPNG HAS STATED PUBLICLY THAT THERE HAS BEEN INCREASED ACTIVITY IN BORDER AREAS. HOWEVER, PRESENT EVIDENCE INDICATES THAT THERE HAS BEEN NO MAJOR CLASH IN RECENT WEEKS, AS CLAIMED BY FEBRUARY 17 PRESS RELEASE MADE BY GROUP IN SYDNEY.

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